GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2741
ANSWERED ON:06.12.2000
GANGA MEKONG PROJECT
RAMCHANDRA BAINDA;UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the Ganga-Mekong Project;

(b) the names of the countries associated with the project;

(c) the benefits likely to accrue to India from the project;

(d) whether any steps have been taken for improvement of bilateral relations in different sectors with countries associated with the project; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a),(b) & (c) The Vientiane Declaration on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation was signed in Laos on 10 November 2000 between India, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.This initiative aims at promoting cooperation among the six countries in the areas of Tourism, Culture, Education, Transport and Communication. Cooperation in these sectors among the six countries opens up business and economic opportunities for Indian companies, and also closer interaction and exchanges between India and these countries in such areas as tourism, transport and communication, education and culture.

(d & e) Yes, Sir. There already exists extensive bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, commercial, cultural, educational and scientific & technological fields with the countries associated with the project. Bilateral cooperation is being strengthened through the exchange of high level political visits, through the Ministerial level joint commissions for economic, scientific and technical cooperation, and through bilateral interaction in the fields of education, culture, agriculture, and investment promotion and protection. The Vientiane Declaration on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation has given a further tangible direction to such bilateral cooperation.